

# CHOLESTEROL from YOU

## CHOLESTEROL IS IMPORTANT

Cholesterol has a bad rap. In reality, your body needs cholesterol to make hormones, vitamin D, and bile acids that help you digest food in your intestines. Cholesterol keeps you healthy.

However, too much of one type (LDL or Low-Density Lipoproteins) or not enough of another (HDL or High-Density Lipoproteins) can put you at risk for heart disease, heart attack, or stroke.

The cells in your body as well as your liver produce cholesterol, which is needed to ensure the body functions properly.

**YOUR LIVER & other cells produce about 75% of your BLOOD CHOLESTEROL**

**GENETICS** plays a big role in how much cholesterol your body produces

Some people inherit genes that cause their bodies to produce too much cholesterol, or keep their body from absorbing enough cholesterol. They could still have high cholesterol even if they're not eating food that's high in cholesterol.

# CHOLESTEROL from FOOD

In the stomach digestive enzymes break your food down in preparation for it to enter the small intestine.

**FOOD is broken down**

**25% of your BLOOD CHOLESTEROL comes from the FOOD YOU EAT**

**and is then PROCESSED**

In the intestines, fat, carbohydrates and proteins are broken down.

These nutrients are absorbed through the intestinal walls and transported through the body.

**the fat then CIRCULATES** through the body

**the liver makes LDL & HDL**

In the liver, triglycerides, cholesterol, and proteins form together to make LDL and HDL. LDL carries cholesterol to all of the cells in the body while HDL carries cholesterol away from cells and back to the liver.

## SATURATED FAT AND CHOLESTEROL

in the food you eat can make your blood cholesterol level go up. Too much LDL will result in cholesterol being deposited into your arteries. This can lead to heart disease, strokes and heart attack.

# REDUCE your CHOLESTEROL

## LIFESTYLE CHANGES CAN HELP LOWER CHOLESTEROL

When a patient without heart disease is first diagnosed with elevated blood cholesterol, health care professionals advise a program of reduced dietary saturated fat and cholesterol, together with physical activity and weight control, as the primary treatment.

Eating a low-saturated-fat, low-cholesterol diet should help lower your LDL (bad cholesterol). If it's not lowered enough by reducing saturated fat and cholesterol, you can increase the amount of soluble fiber in your diet.

**REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF saturated fat & cholesterol IN YOUR DIET**

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** can help raise HDL and LOWER LDL

Regular physical activity (30 minutes daily) can help raise HDL (good cholesterol) levels and lower LDL levels. This is especially important for individuals with high triglyceride and/or low HDL levels who are overweight with a large waist measurement.

Excess weight tends to increase your LDL levels. Losing this weight is not only important in lowering your LDL levels but is especially important for those with several risk factors, like low HDL levels or high triglyceride levels.

**LOSING WEIGHT** can help LOWER LDL

# how STATINS work

## THE MAIN GOAL OF CHOLESTEROL TREATMENT

is to lower LDL (bad cholesterol) levels. When diet and exercise are not enough to reduce cholesterol to goal levels, doctors often prescribe medication—the most prominent being statins. By interfering with the production of cholesterol, statin medications can slow the formation of plaques in the arteries.

Cholesterol plaques build up slowly, eventually resulting in blocked arteries (atherosclerosis), and reducing the flow of oxygen-rich blood to your heart. This can lead to heart disease.

**BAD CHOLESTEROL (LDL)** sticks to the arteries and FORMS PLAQUE

**statins help BLOCK PRODUCTION** of LDL in the liver

The body needs cholesterol to function, but sometimes, based on genetics, food intake, and activity, the body produces too much cholesterol. Statins block an enzyme that's key to the liver's production of cholesterol. This inhibits the liver's ability to produce cholesterol. The goal is less cholesterol in the bloodstream and a reduction in risk for high-cholesterol-related diseases.

## Resources

"High Blood Cholesterol: What you need to know"  
National Heart Blood and Lung Institute: [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

"Healthfinder"  
[www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov)

"About Cholesterol"  
American Heart Association: [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

"MedlinePlus"  
[www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)

"Understanding Cholesterol: The Good, the Bad, and the Necessary"  
Harvard Health Publications  
[www.health.harvard.edu](http://www.health.harvard.edu)

